



The International Fancy Guppy Association



Dedicated to Promoting The Fancy Guppy Hobby

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Summer Dreams – Boca Raton Show -2003

By Michael Raimondi

Summer Dreams and Winter Blues. If you have an opportunity to attend an IFGA show in 2004, do it. For over the long winter evenings, I often find my thoughts reflecting upon the guppy shows from the prior show season. Such memories hold me not only until the new show season traditionally begins in April of the following year but also for years to come.

When I think back to April 2003, I remember the show season began in Florida. And it began great. Show Chairman Ramiro Carbonell graciously invited everyone working at the show to his home on Friday for a pre show cookout. By the pool, the Carbonell's served everyone barbecued steaks, wine and rich deserts. Even more important than great food, and that is not written lightly, was the opportunity to listen to Ramiro explain his thoughts on his most recent Half Black (H/B) breeding program. In Ramiro's case, such thoughts were limited to his H/B AOC and H/B Purples but could easily apply to my H/B Pastels or other H/Bs too. After this, Ramiro invited everyone into his guppy room where 80 neatly organized tanks were displayed.

If you have never been into a great guppy breeder's fish room, then you have never been to Fort Knox, either. What I saw were not the type of guppies seen in stores. Forget that. I saw his best breeders with huge bodies, and large dorsal and caudal fins. It was fascinating to see the way in which Ramiro bred the H/B Purples and AOC colors in such a way as to complement and enhance each other. Ramiro explained the economies of choosing complementary breeding colors as well as why certain guppies were being used within a certain line for breeding purposes thereby permitting an increase in size, vigor and color. I don't care how many times I have read what to do. Seeing what to do, makes it easier.

No matter where the shows are held whether it be Utah, Alabama, Florida, Missouri, Michigan or Milwaukee to name a few, by volunteering to help out at the show, the host club almost always invites you into a prominent breeders fish room or sometimes, even two. So, if you want into the club, then sign up to help fill bowls, bench fish or set up. It's worth it and many hands also ease the work load, too.

Now back to the Florida show. After setting up for the show, it was great to relax in the warm heated outdoor Florida hotel pool. The Florida club was able to provide guests with half off the normal hotel rate and free breakfast by the pool. (Note: for the record, I was advised by a reliable source, Bill Carwile, that the heated pool was a magnet for much to see. I confess to no such personal memories, even more so, if my better half should read this article).

Saturday is the best day for each show and in Florida, this was no exception. In the morning, because I am not a member of the host club, I signed the volunteer form early and was able to help bench guppies. Sometimes, there are too many volunteers, so it pays to sign up early. In the afternoon, my wife who is not a show judge was able to observe the judging as I was fortunate enough to sign her up early. Again, sometimes there are just too many people who want to observe, so if you signed up early, you get to stand behind a senior judging team, listen and take note of their comments and later when you look at your guppies or re-read the judging booklet recall the senior judging team's comments as it relates to your guppies. Later that day, if you helped out or know a member of the host club, you normally get invited to the hospitality room. This may be the best part of the day and again, Florida was no exception. During the day, you get to listen. At night, you get to ask questions and learn. On this night, while the Florida club was serving an Italian feast, those who participated were able to listen to Ramiro, and such guppy luminaries as Paul Gorski, Bill Carwile, Alan Opdyke, Dan Espinosa, Bill Sauer, Joe Rosenberry Jr., Bill Driscoll, Stephen Kwartler, Kevin Seay, Barron Bartlett, Hank Darin. Additionally, Gene Baudier and Tomoko Young were present, who later in the season won the Guppy Man of the Year and Breeder of the Year Award respectively. Other shows, such as Michigan, Milwaukee, New York, Utah, California and Alabama will normally have other dignitaries. So, if the opportunity presents itself, try to attend more than one show per year from different regions of the country.

Sunday was fun, too. Before you help to tear down the stands and pack the guppies up for shipment back to their home state, the host club has an auction. Traditionally, auctions present an opportunity to purchase some new lines at fair prices. Naturally, when you pay a fair but not necessarily the higher price, you know that you are taking a chance. At auction, the seller is not guaranteeing the quality of the babies whereas such is normally the case when you buy directly from a reputable breeder who has a proven track record. However, for me, this actually adds to the excitement. Over the years, I have been very pleased although on a few occasions, sadly disappointed. Nevertheless, if you enjoy a calculated gamble, then an auction is perfect for you, too.

With memories such as these, it makes it easier to wait until April 2004.

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